

**TESTIMONY OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
  
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND  
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
  
IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 758**

**An Act To Protect Boats, Moorings and Docks in the Inland Waters of  
the State**

**SPONSORED BY: Representative HICKMAN of Winthrop**

**Date of Hearing: April 9, 2013**

Good afternoon Senator Dutremble, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Major Chris Cloutier of the Maine Warden Service and I will be representing the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife today and testifying in opposition to **L.D. 758**.

LD 758 would prohibit the fishing of inland waters within 250' feet of shoreline containing, docks, boats, moorings or swimming floats and require the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to adopt rules to implement this closure.

The Department of Inland Fisheries opposes this bill. In fact, the Department works to create increased fishing opportunity, not limit it. Fishing in Maine is a cherished family tradition and is an economic stimulus that draws anglers from around the world. Access to Maine inland waters is protected under the great ponds act so that this great resource can be enjoyed by all people regardless of their economic means or physical abilities. The Department works tirelessly to enhance and protect access to the water for all citizens and this bill would restrict fishing opportunity for all people.

Many of Maine's inland shorelines are occupied by camps and their associated docks, boats, moorings, and swim floats and on some water bodies it is nearly impossible to find an unoccupied area of water frontage. Shoreline fishing from boats and docks or in the area of boats and docks are often locations that are home to the best fishing habitat and is also the most accessible to youth anglers, camp owners, and people with physical limitations or disabilities. This bill would severely restrict fishing opportunity for some and make it impossible for others.

Current Maine Law defines the area within 200' from any shoreline as the water safety zone and watercraft are restricted to headway speed limitations (except for picking up and dropping off a water-skier.) This law provides protection of shoreline erosion and minimizes boat wake impact to shoreline property.

Current law, department policy, and program initiatives seek to enhance public access to public resources regardless of economic status, boat ownership, or abilities. This bill would restrict and or eliminate fishing opportunity in some of Maine's best and most attractive fishing spots.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.